

# SONIC RED WHEEL

Special  
Preview Issue  
1992

An interview with  
**JOAN JETT**

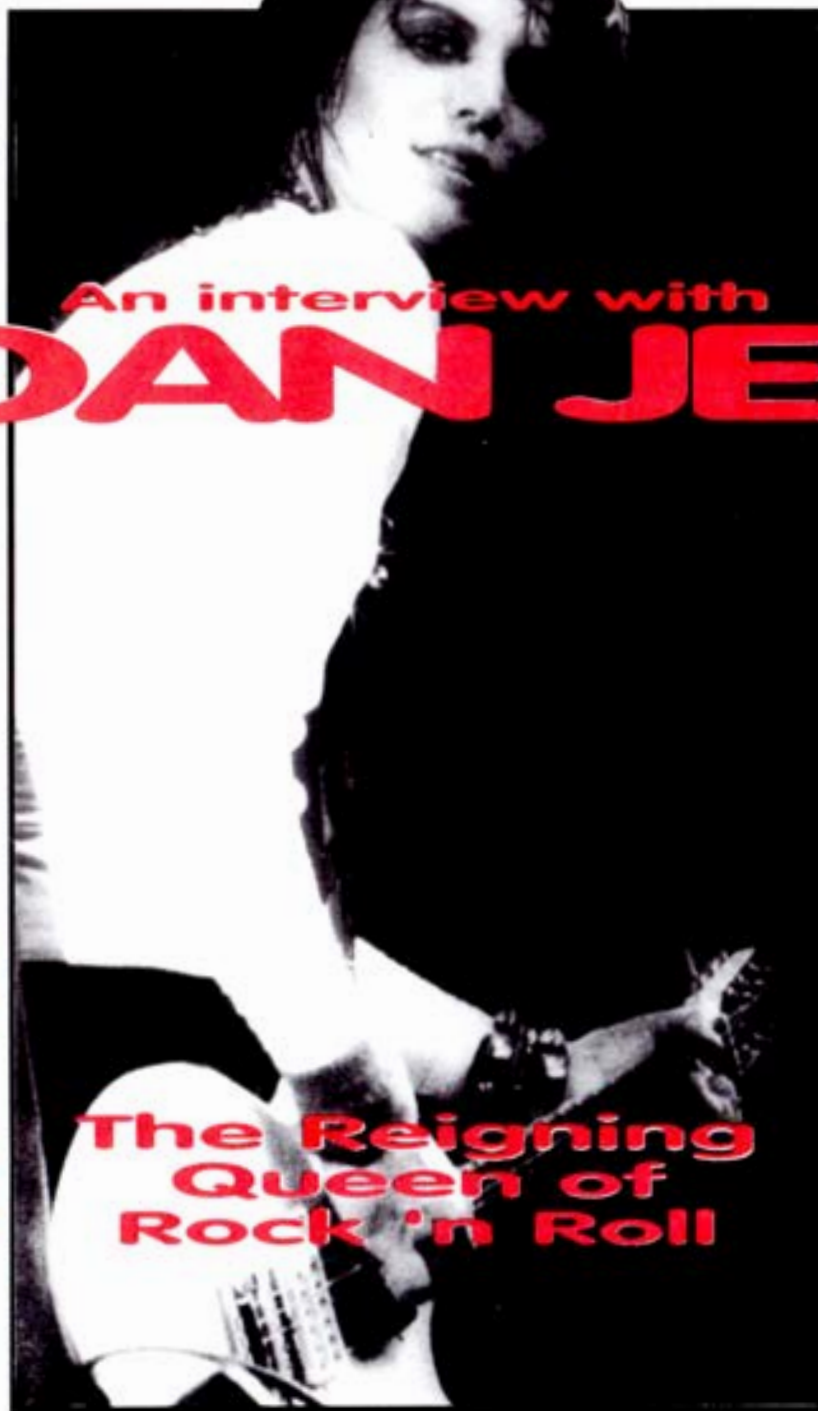


## SNFU

The Second  
Coming

## Tir Groupé

Supporting  
Canada's  
Franco  
Underground



## The Reigning Queen of Rock 'n Roll



## The Stand

Canadian to  
the Core

## Stuff...

Record reviews  
Kanuck Kulture  
Band Profiles  
CaNews

# NEW FOR '92

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TURN ON

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THE WATER (single)

DAYGLO

GREEN MAGNET SCHOOL

BLOOD MUSIC



# NOTE PAD

**SONIC  
REDUCER**

## National Capital May Lose Its Rep As Party Central

OTTAWA—Egads it's awful tough getting excited about anything when your vitals are freezing, but this winter's been doubly tough—a two edged rusted blade.

Ottawa the city of halves, halves not a decent live concert bar. The first domino to tumble was Zaphod Beeblebrox under the jaws of a Bell bulldozer, making way for a beautiful parking lot. Then the legendary imperial theatre we called Barrymore's was chained up and ripped apart. The Penguin stopped booking bands and is in the dance scene on meat market row. Café deLuxe gave up and reverted to a poseur hole in the wall. And, most recently Club Zinc closed shop when the rent hit the fan. And it wasn't even in Ottawa. (It was in Hull—ed)

The only bright spot is the recently reopened Zaphod B. But it's a new club with a new policy that looks like it's going to be more of an older-looking mainstream-audience place. We'll just have to see.

So where do bands play? Montreal, Toronto and the odd Belleville basement. Pretty funny. Not. Who wants to rent out an acoustic disaster of a school gym, or a plush carpet conference hall to keep rock 'n roll kicking in this town?

That's what we're down to. Help.

**John Sekerka**

## Halifax Musicians Get On Track

24-track, that is

HALIFAX—A new 24-track, state-of-the-art sound recording facility will be unveiled at an as-yet undisclosed Quinnpool Rd. location in central Halifax.

Adinsound Studio is the result of the collaboration of some ambitious young musicians including Brad Parsons, Steven Comeau, and Sean Kirby, and Kate Finlayson.

Frustrated with the lack of accessible, professional facilities in the Provincial Capital region, they simply hatched the idea amongst themselves, went to the bank, made a wish list, and voilà! Adinsound Studio is born.

"This studio came from the fact that we are musicians", says Kirby (also a member of **Infra Group**). "And the choices we had down here were just not up to the standards we wanted as musicians. There are artists around here, from the youngest independent band to bands working on a national and international level, whose needs are not being met by the other facilities in town."

"We identified a niche in the

market", says Comeau (of the band **Infrasong**). "And then we just went through with it, you know, with a minimum of dithering. I've worked at a number of arts Co-op organizations in the same field and while they fulfill a definite need, committees tend to get bogged down in hidden agendas and procedural hassles. For something like a studio, you need focus and vision, things very difficult to get in those kinds of collectives."

Some may think these partners are hasty and rash. Certainly the record of the underground music scene here is one of almost constant hot air with little real concrete results. Adinsong and Infra Dig's collective achievements already outweigh many of their peers (except perhaps for **100 Flowers**, with one LP, two videos, and a new LP due out shortly). Adinsound Studio may be the breakthrough that the local scene has been waiting for.

**Ronald Foley Macdonald**  
Fax Magazine

## Pressing Matters

TORONTO—!★# Magazine (or something like that) just joined the growing number of indie music tabloids that are supporting bands across the country.

Released in March, the first issue featured the normal mixture of charts, interviews and reviews, with a special emphasis on Canadian independent bands. This reflects the programming policy of Ryerson's CKLN, one of Canada's premiere college stations, with which the mag is associated.

!★# (or whatever) joins Ottawa's **Trans FM** and Vancouver's **Discorder** as recent tabloid converts following in the footsteps of long-lasting **VOX** (Calgary).



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# Getting Gas, Beading South or "Getting Lost (Dakotas), Looking For Texas"

**TORONTO**—The first stop on the way to Texas from Toronto is a Queen Street record store.

The **Last Dakotas** performed at **Plate This Records** as part of a benefit to raise funds for gas to Texas so the band can perform at the South by Southwest (SXSW) festival in Austin.

The benefit took place March 7. The **Dakotas** took the stage at the 3-11 Club in Austin on March 17.

Other Canadian acts going to the festival include Jr. Gone Wild, **Blue Rodeo**, The Leslie Spit Tree, The Shuffle Bemons, Sara Craig, The Holly Cole Trio and Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet.

Donations were accepted in return for beer. The store was specially licensed for this invitation-only event.



The **Dakotas** played a hilarious live set, bringing life to a spare room in the back of the

store. The band blends parts of country music with some good old fashioned rock.

Toronto singer / poet Meryn Cadell attended the SXSW festival last year "It was a lot of fun but it did nothing to advance our careers," said Cadell.

She played with The **Barenaked Ladies** and the **Rheostatics** "There were no ecclesiastical experiences like finding ourselves, finding God or finding a record label."

"This is more like playing a booze can," said **Dakotas'** bassist Greg McConnell of the surroundings.

Guitarist Adam Faux said that the band will surprise many people down south with their sound. We're not really into the Texas thing," he said.

Steven Sandor

**LINT**

© sekerka



AIR GUITARIST TUNING UP

## Don't Throw Bocks -Exchange Them!

**TORONTO**—An idea whose time has come: An organized exchange program for bands of all stripes and types to play other cities in our grand country.

The **Rock Exchange** is a non-profit program organized by ex-Montrealer (yes, one of the millions) Robert Reedijk, who recently moved down the 401 to Toronto (one of the millions).

Reedijk, who describes the Exchange as "Like a dating service for bands," says that it benefits bands by opening new markets to them.

"Bands are matched up with compatible bands from other cities—by compatible, I mean in regards to style and drawing power," he says. "And they organize an exchange where each band hosts the other in their respective city by organiz-

ing a show and publicizing it."

The drawing power of the local band will provide an instant market for the visiting band as well as cutting down costs by arranging the sharing of equipment and finding accommodations.

While the service has chiefly benefitted Montreal and Toronto bands so far, the service is open to any bands interested in touring.

Bands interested in the service should send a complete bio and tape, along with touring info (where they want to play, when, etc.) and details of their own city situation such as their drawing power (be honest, please) to The **Rock Exchange**, c/o Boscobob Music, 156 Pape Ave., Toronto, Ontario M4M 2V8, or call (416) 469-1534. Big charge for the service: \$2.

# TIR GRUPÉ

**I**t's a cold—damn cold—Friday night in Montreal. Most people are hurrying home or hurrying into the closest disco, but there's a long line-up outside of Foufoules Electriques, the city's Taj Mahal of Punk Rock.

Most of the kids have borrowed sufficient ID, or have grown their hair long enough to fool the club's ever-vigilant bouncers. The reason for all this effort?—A band with the unlikely name of **B.A.R.F.** (Blasting All Rotten Fuckers). The name may be tasteless (so to speak), but that's beside the point—their record launch will draw 500 to the club. And a record launch the next night for **Banlieue Rouge** will also fill the place.

The two bands have something in common: They're both managed, and have their shows produced and their records pressed by a Quebec-based organization called Tir Groupé.

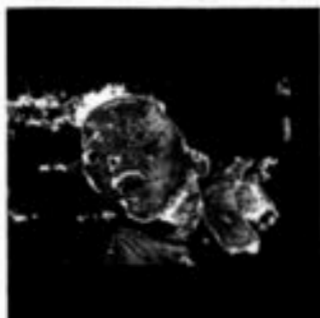
Tir Groupé has a very short

history, but an impressive one. In a few short years it has grown to be probably the single largest influence in the underground francophone rock scene.

"We started out as a touring company for French bands—European French bands," says Nicolas Bouchard, one of the group's organizers. "The first shows we ever did were with Bérurier Noir and Ludwig Von 88, The Young Gods and Parabellum. We really started in '87. Now it has turned out to be more aimed at the production and management of Quebec bands."

He notes that this turning towards home-grown talent was a very deliberate decision by the group.

"It could've grown in another way: If we'd followed the tendency which was to do only European bands it could have grown a lot bigger a lot faster," says Nicolas. "We were starting to get offers to do more commercial bands, and we would've been working with places like the (1,000-seat) Spectrum all the time. If you grow, you don't play venues like Quasimodo or l'Hémisphère Gauche. We just changed our objectives and decided to work more on the local scene. It made more sense



**Aiding and abetting the huge growth of the francophone music underground**

and we got more pleasure out of it."

Tir Groupé has a permanent staff of seven people who control different aspects of the organization from publicity, to posterage, to the organization of shows. This number swells when shows are produced, and did lead the group to over-extend themselves at times.

"We went all over. We started booking and managing bands all over the place, just because we had the personnel to do it. But now we've decided to do much less," says Nicolas. "Rather than doing a show a week, we're now doing one show a month. We make it work for the band—make it work for everyone involved—so we get a good return for the effort that's put in."

One band that has benefitted from Tir Groupé's efforts is Banlieue Rouge, a band that has quickly established itself as the most popular alternative band in Quebec.

"They've helped our band in many ways," says Safwan, the group's singer. "I think we would have been able to do all the things they have done, but we wouldn't have been able to do them as well. It's hard when you're in a rock band to think of all the details, so it's good to have people you can rely on to do some of the jobs you may not want to put all your energy into."

He points out that one reason they work so well together is that Tir Groupé doesn't act like a traditional management or record company, trying to force the artists into line.

"They allow us to think more about the music and less about business," he says. "But at the same time, we get to make all our own decisions and control the direction of the band. I think it's basically just what we wanted. If they think we're doing something wrong, they won't just tell us not to do it. But they do give us their opinions and their advice. The

thing is, if it works for us it works for them, and vice-versa."

Both the band and the organization are part of a flowering of the underground rock scene in Quebec over the last few years. While it was hard to find franco-alternative acts in the mid-80s, now there's often five or six playing in different clubs in a single weekend.

"I think it happened here a bit like it happened in France. It was when Bérurier Noir came to play Québec—it gave a boost to bands whose potential was always there. It gave them the incentive to go out and play," says Nicolas. "Quebec bands saw that they could be successful—or at least they could play to a real audience."

He notes that these European bands showed that it was possible to be a rock band without having to sing in English.

"The first bands who came out were really making a political statement by singing in French, but now I don't think they give a fuck. It's just a natural thing for them to sing in French—they don't even think about it," he says. "If we'd signed Grim Skunk (the next Tir Groupé release) two years ago we would have had people saying 'How can you do that? They sing in English. That's not right.' But now, most of the bands and most of the people realize that whatever is most natural for the band is alright. If they're French and they sing in French, that's fine. If they're French and they sing in English because it's more natural for them, then that's no problem either. It's not an issue anymore."

•More in our first issue



**"We just changed our objectives and decided to work more on the local scene. It made more sense..."**

A black and white portrait of Joan Jett, looking slightly to the side with a serious expression. She has dark hair and is wearing a dark, textured top. The name "Joan Jett" is overlaid on the image in a large, stylized font.

# Joan Jett

**E**veryone has that certain someone they want to meet. Maybe it's to do a little idol worship with Madonna, Joey Ramone, Elvira, or Kevin Costner. Maybe to say 'Hi' to the Pope, or to give Brian Mulroney a quick kick in the nether regions. Me, I always wanted to talk to Joan Jett.

So now you know that this might not be the most objective article ever published. But, let's face it—Joan is the ultimate rock 'n roller. She was burning out guitar licks and touring the world with her first band, the

**Runaways**, at an age when most of us were still trying to figure out what algebra was. And she has never lost that rock 'n roll spirit, even as she approaches thirty-something.

"I play rock 'n roll. If you want to pigeon-hole the music, fine, but rock 'n roll has always stood for individuality. So don't say Joan does rock 'n roll, but what kind of rock 'n roll?... I don't even know what kind of rock 'n roll," she says in an interview before a recent show. "I mean I've done all kinds of it, I don't know the difference. It's just three-chord rock 'n roll.



A little idol worship  
by Paul Gott

## *The Hear'I, of Bock & BoH*

Agressive rock 'n roll."

"Rock 'n Roll" is certainly a phrase that keeps coming up when you talk to Joan. Her speaking voice, by the way, is even more gravelly, more New York and (yes) more rock 'n roll than her singing voice.

One thing I didn't expect was that my first live encounter with Joan would happen in a Toronto club called Rock 'n Roll Heaven—a club that was carved out of a shopping mall's basement parking lot and managed to keep all the ambience of the garage. Then again, playing small sweaty clubs is part of

what makes Joan such an anti-corporate rocker.

"We always play all over the place," says Joan. "I've never been one to come into just the big city in each state and play and then call that a United States tour. I mean, we played seven cities in Iowa. Most people can't even name seven cities in Iowa. I just like to do that because it's taking the music to the fans which is why I started a band in the first place. I think a lot of bands lose sight of that."

But it's more than just a local policy. **Joan Jett and the Blackhearts** aren't just Big In



Japan, they're big all over the world.

"We just came back from doing a couple of shows in Thailand. They were great—we had a lot of fun," she says. "You know, there's no reason to think that people in Thailand, or a lot of other countries we've played like Malaysia or Singapore wouldn't like what we're doing. Kids in America like rock 'n roll, and kids in Europe and Japan and Australia like it. So why not Thailand? It's just that most people don't think of Thailand as a rock 'n roll type of area."

Back in Toronto, I'm trying to figure out if Ontario's a rock 'n roll type of area. The club seems to have attracted a largely big-hair/babes in black underwear metal crowd who are standing around watching a giant video screen. **Lee Aaron's** latest video is on, followed by

**Aldo Nova**. The crowd cheers for an old **AC/DC** tune and **Ozzy's** No More Tears. (I would have cheered **The Cycle Sluts' I Wish You Were A Beer** if I didn't think that applauding video: is kinda lame. Or, with this crowd, kinda lame.)

I'm just not sure that the place is on Joan's wavelength. I mean, this ain't what's on Joan's Stereo.

"I listen to what they used to call Punk Rock," she says. "Actually, I was just listening to **Fugazi**—which sounds great—and I'm about to listen to **Jane's Addiction**, **Lire** and **Rare**. These bands—as well as **Social Distortion** and **Nirvana**—bands like that just write great songs. I think people overlook that."

Joan has always had roots in the underground scene. She recorded several songs with **Paul Cook** and **Steve Jones** of the **Sex Pistols** for her first release, and

she produced the first record for the ground-breaking California hardcore band **The Germs**. But the break-up of the **Runaways** resulted in some bad feelings down California-way and she headed across the country to pick up her solo career.

"I don't know what the California underground thinks about me anymore. That's why I left when the **Runaways** broke up: It was a really weird vibe," she explains. "Nobody wanted to do the music I wanted to do. I wanted to stay mainstream rock 'n roll... I mean, hard rock 'n roll, but melodic and with

**I**t's a great ego stroke to sell out a 20,000 seat stadium, but the kids don't get a great view and the sound sucks."

hooks. So I just split. People were like 'Ha ha ha, the **Runaways** finally broke up.' I wanted to start fresh in New York."

Her solo career has resulted in a string of successful albums, including several number one hits. But the **Blackhearts** are still driven by their fans, not the money they spend.

"Yeah, it's a great ego stroke to sell out a 20,000 seat stadium, but the kids don't get a great view and the sound sucks," says Joan. "I think if I could sell 20,000 seats, I'd rather play five nights at a 2,500 or 3,000 seat theatre where the sound is much better, the kids can get right up to the stage, they get a better view, and you're in town for a while longer. To me that makes sense. That's doing rock 'n roll the way it should be done, not just getting in and out of town for the bucks."

There's also the fact that





mega-shows and mega-stardom just wouldn't be that much fun.

"I'm most certainly not looking for celebrity status like someone like Madonna because I don't want people hanging out outside my house or have people looking at my every move and have something read into everything I do. That's not why I got into a band," says Joan. "Of course when I started the band I wanted to have hits, I wanted to be well-known. But as far as being a celebrity, I think there's a difference. I'd rather be a well-known musician and be respected for what I do."

I think it would be fair to say that Jett has achieved not only respect but a rabid cult following over the years. Enough, for instance, to get a sizable Montreal contingent to travel 500 kilometres down the 401 and hang out in a shopping mall basement.

When the lights go down and the video screen goes blank, everyone turns into a Joan Jett fanatic and the small area in front of the stage packs with sweaty bodies. The band appears, the crowd cheers, the

"It wasn't an attempt to change my image. To be perfectly frank, I just got really sick and tired of opening rock mags and seeing other bands with my haircut. I don't mean that from a conceited point of view, but it got to a point where I couldn't look in the mirror in the morning and be serious. I mean I was becoming a parody of myself," she explains. "So I thought 'I'm in the studio, I'm just going to cut it all off. If I don't like it, it'll grow back.' That's the only difference—I cut my hair so I don't look like every other band. And I love it. It's great. It's not that it's easy to take care of or anything, but it looks great when it gets wet and these kind of things are important."

And it's certainly important on this night. The temperature, which must have been a balmy 30 degrees at the beginning of the evening goes up about another 20 when the band hits the stage.

I mean, the crowd was a sweaty mess so the band must've been dying under the stage lights. But that didn't stop them from plowing through a rocking version of the Pistols' *Pretty Vacant* and a Runaways standard, *Cherry Bomb*, to open the set. They follow with the Springsteen-penned *Light of Day*, Chuck Berry's *Tulane*, and AC/DC's *Dirty Deeds*.

For a band with a long history and a lot of great original tunes, the Blackhearts aren't afraid to cover other people's material.

"I've done covers since the Runaways, when bands didn't like to do covers," says Joan. "Everybody's vibe was always 'It's gotta be original material. Otherwise people won't respect you.' So nobody did covers. The Runaways did them, the Blackhearts did them. And now,

**I just got really sick and tired of opening rock mags and seeing other bands with my haircut."**

music blasts, and the whole dance floor sways partially in time with the music, and partially as people try to manoeuvre closer to the stage to get a better look at the New Look Joan Jett.

Haircuts shouldn't normally be an issue in a rock 'n roll story, but when Joan changes her look after 15 years of being a female rock icon, it becomes an issue.

all of a sudden, everybody is doing cover songs. You know, beer commercials—I mean everybody. They've destroyed a lot of good songs."

This is one reason that, while covers remain an important part of a Blackhearts show, there are none on the new record, *Notorious*. Another reason is a burn-out on covers after the all-cover *Hit List* LP a couple of years back.

"Because of *The Hit List* we had three years between *Up Your Alley* and *Notorious* to write new songs," says Joan. "So whatever would have been original on the *Hit List*, we held over for this album. And, also, I don't see a lot of good songs that I would do that haven't already been destroyed by somebody. Now I'd pick something really weird—something really obscure, really alternative."

On stage, the band breaks into more original material, but doesn't concentrate only on the new record. There's a large number of older tunes in the set.

Something ain't working on stage. Joan yells at someone backstage and then launches into another tune. It looks like at any given time everything might fall apart, but it never does. The band's just too tight and it keeps on rolling along.

"As far as what goes on a record, I have total control," says Joan. "There's no way you can get me to sing something or play something that I don't want to do cos I'll just keep making mistakes and I'll never be able to sing it just quite right. I'll always sound shitty if I'm not into it. That's not being mean or being a jerk—I mean it's my music and that's one part where I won't be told what to do. I don't mind having suggestions made, but don't dictate,

Forget about that. Don't say 'Well let's do a more poppy thing and get you more fans' or 'Don't wear black'—don't even discuss that with me cos I'll never speak to you again."

Joan manages her own career by dealing with Epic records through her own record company, Blackheart Records which was established only after her first solo recording was turned down by companies all over the States who weren't impressed with her previous band. Strangely enough, the Runaways have now turned semi-legendary and have a major cult following.

"It just blows my mind," says Joan of the Runaways recent revival. "I don't hear it so much here in America, but when you go overseas to places like Japan you understand how big the Runaways really are. We were big there anyway when we were a band, but it's even more so now. Now it's like we're on a serious pedestal and it's very humbling. A very very humbling feeling. I think they were just very impressed that we didn't just do what girls were expected to do. We just said 'Forget about

**I**ll always sound shitty if I'm not into it. That's not being mean or being a jerk—I mean it's my music and that's one part where I won't be told what to do."

it' and did what was considered to be, well, trashy music or something."

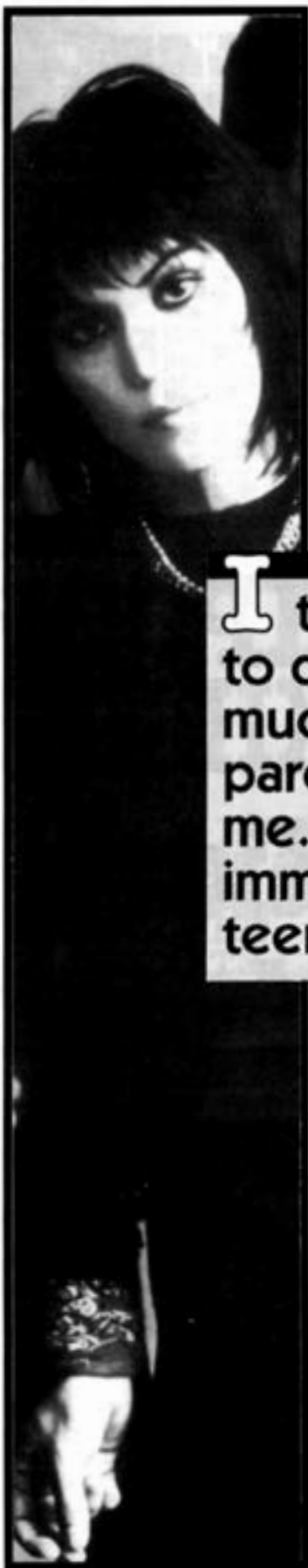
That newfound admiration has a bitter taste to it though, since the band didn't receive any great support for breaking new ground at the time.

"It's funny. We stuck to our



**SONIC  
REDUCER**

**12**



guns and we took a lot of shit at the time," says Joan. "I mean, it makes me want to be hysterical with laughter when I think that anyone would want to revere the Runaways, especially in America. Maybe not the kids who didn't get a chance to see it. But people that are old enough to have seen the band, the writers who panned the band—and there were lots of 'em. I always used to get into fights with them too, which probably didn't help much. But they used to start out with the ridiculous question: 'Why do you think girls can play rock 'n roll?' And I'd sit there and be very logical about it and say 'Look, if a woman can play a cello, or flute

roll. But I think now it's more subtle in that people will come up to me and say 'So, when are you going to give up this crazy rock 'n roll stuff and find yourself a husband and have some kids.' They're not-so-subtly hinting 'When are you going to become a real woman?' To me, that's bullshit. You know, if a guy does the same thing, he's considered cool."

Then again, what could be more cool than ending off a set with *Bad Reputation*, the song from her first LP which summed up the Runaways experience, both musically and lyrically? Nothing, of course.

The cops are in, telling them to shut the show down because

**I think that deciding to do rock 'n roll was much harder on my parents than it was on me. I've enjoyed it immensely—what teenager wouldn't?"**

of T.O.'s dismally early closing hour. The band powers through the end of the song with as much energy as they put into the opening bars of the set. And the crowd is left gasping for air and yelling for more.

The band's hot and tired, hanging out in a

or violin in a symphony orchestra, she can most certainly play guitar and drums."

It's an attitude that Joan doesn't hear a lot nowadays, but she doesn't think that the increasing number of female rock musicians has altered perceptions to any great extent.

"It's changed, but not much. On the surface it seems like it's gotten a lot better. But people will still come up to a girl bass player, or whatever—a female musician—and go 'Wow, you're a girl and you can actually play'," she says. "It's not so hostile, maybe. I mean, there was so much hostility during the Runaways. We were spat at, had things thrown at us, just because we were girls playing rock 'n

back room in the basement of a Toronto shopping mall. One has to ask if Joan ever thought of changing careers.

"No. Never. I've had some of the greatest learning experiences; I've travelled the world. I've met all sorts of people. I've seen all sorts of opinions and views," she answers.

"And I'm still way young enough that if I ever wanted to become a dentist or a doctor or something I could go back to school and do that. I've still got a lot of time to do whatever the hell I want to do. I think that deciding to do rock 'n roll was much harder on my parents than it was on me. I've enjoyed it immensely—what teenager wouldn't?"





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# Beaver tales

an examination of Kanadian culture

**T**he game's been a bit dull so far, but then early in the second period David Shaw levels a Kings forward and this gets the crowd out of their seats for only the second time (the first being the intermission). Seconds later, the Kings get a goal to break the ice and convince the locals that Vanbiesbrook can indeed be beaten.

Waddaya think? Just another Saturday night at the local tavern with a satellite dish or live action NHL hockey in the desert? If you picked number two then drop me a line and get your free two-week subscription to this rag.

## A Las Vegas gamble

Late last September, this magazine sent an intrepid reporter (me) down to Las Vegas to cover what can only be called history in the making, and

quite possibly "history in the baking." The sun was setting in the West (right?), it's 85 degrees farenheit, mountains provide the backdrop with joshua trees in the foreground and, down below, a regulation size NHL hockey rink stuck in the middle of Caesar's Palace's parking lot with regulation-size NHL hockey players playing on it.

## Fighting for a little publicity

In the local Las Vegas press they played up the game with the same hype as a Tyson-Holyfield or Tyson-Givens bout. It was interesting to arrive at the hotel and get one of those tourist mags that let's you know what's going on around town and find the smiling face of Brantford's own Wayne Gretzky on the cover. I would have to guess that Rich Little would probably have been the only other Canadian to have had this dubious distinction.

To see Canada's second-favourite national pastime being played in the desert was fascinating if only because the public address announcer felt the need to explain all the rules as the game went along. But, after announcing several offsides and icings, he seemed to realize that this crowd was quite intelligent and probably understood the game of hockey better than he did.

## Those crazy American gallons

During the game I was thinking of other Canadian sporting pastimes we could bring to the desert. We could bring barrel-jumping to Caesar's Palace.

by Warren 'Mr.  
Wonderful' Campbell



PHOTO BY AL BROWN/AMERICAN

**SONIC  
REDUCER**

Now that they've figured out how to put ice outside, all that would be needed are some barrels imported from Canada. After all, we wouldn't want our nation's best barrel-jumpers leaping over foreign barrels and being thrown off by those crazy American gallons.

Furthermore, the ice at Caesar's could conceivably be adapted for an international bonspiel. The sports books at the local casinos could lay odds on whether the team from Northern Ontario would be using pushbrooms or those plain brown kitchen ones. And if they found the cost of providing ice prohibitive, they could always bring lacrosse to the southwestern masses. Those Indian-rubber balls would make great souvenirs and they could even sell them on keychains.

According to the Los Angeles Kings owner and the local media, the game was a success

**"The sports books at the local casinos could lay odds on whether the team from Northern Ontario would be using pushbrooms or those plain brown kitchen ones."**

on all fronts. The crowd was knowledgeable and cheered at exactly the right times. In fact, when Shaw levelled that unidentified King left-winger, all 13,007 fans rose to their feet waiting for the obligatory fisticuffs.

# OUT NOW

**NORTHERN  
VULTURES**



**TABARNAK  
HARDCORE**

Compact Disc

**FRINGE**  
PRODUCT

Cassette

Out Standing in a field  
by **J. D. Head**



**T**he Stand are The Great Canadian Band, even if they're not The Best Known Canadian Band. They're four farm kids from rural Ontario who've formed a group that combines some Canuck-country influences with the energy of punk rock in a neighbourhood that only ever heard AOR, Top 40, and the occasional barnyard animal before.

Forging new boundaries in Canadian music are Doug MacPherson (guitar and vocals), Glen Wallace (drums), Chris Page (vocals and guitar) and Tom Foreman (bass and vocals). Chris and Tom dropped by Sonic Headquarters recently for a little chat.



**SR:** Tom, you're the new guy. How'd you get involved with the band?

**Tom:** I was a fan. We live in the same area and I'd heard a lot of their stuff. I'd just been messing around in other bands—shit bands. I was snatched from the jaws of mediocrity. They dragged me off stage one day, slapped me around and told me I had to join.

**Chris:** A public service. We were glad to do it.

**SR:** *We always see Bainsville or Glengarry on your posters. Is your sound typical of what we should expect to come out of eastern Ontario farm country?*

**Chris:** I don't know if it's typical or not. We put Bainsville because that's our mailing address and Glengarry because that's the county we all come

# THE STAND



from. But it's kind of frustrating sometimes because people might say "They're from Ottawa" or from the Ottawa-area and we're not, so it's nice to locate ourselves more precisely.

**SR:** *Got something against the Ottawa area?*

**Chris:** Well... (laughs) I wouldn't say we've got anything against the place, but people in Ottawa have never considered us to be a local band, and we've never been thought of as a Montreal band either, even though we live close by, so we haven't been included in a lot of things other local bands might have been. It's been difficult getting started being where we're from—the sticks.

**SR:** *But you were on OG*

Photos fielded by  
**by Rina Gribovsky**

## The true north, noisy and free





**W**e all loved punk bands and we all had our licenses. So I'd get my dad's pick-up truck and once a week we'd all meet in the high school cafeteria and practice there. Eventually we moved to my chicken coop."

records' It Came From Canada 5.

**Chris:** Yeah, but that was a real fluke. We used to go to a lot of shows, to see the **Gruesomes** amongst others, and we got friendly with their manager, Neil Schwartzman, and he said he'd do a demo for us. And so we did a demo with him about four years ago and he really put a push on to get us on the album. It was nice of him because it opened a lot of doors for us—we got to play the Voodoo Bar B.Q., and other things came out of that.

**SR:** Do you consider yourselves a garage type of band?

**Chris:** It's hard to say right now. We were, but...

**Tom:** So many bands get stuck with that label. There's such a variety from underground to pop that it just doesn't mean that much anymore.

**Chris:** I guess we could be called a garage band. We're a chicken-coop band. A basement band.

**SR:** How do you form a band when you don't even live close together?

**Chris:** We started out as a high school band. For about a year, in 1985, we were a trio without a bassist. Really, we were just three friends who hung out together and liked to listen to the **Ramones** and the **Clash** and things like that. Alien music to the area.

**SR:** You guys must've been the only ones for 50 miles playing that stuff.

**Chris:** For sure. I'll admit that when we first got together we played some pretty crappy covers—it was a learning process. But we all loved punk bands and we all had our licenses. I'd get my dad's pick-up truck and once a week we'd all meet in the high school cafeteria and practice there. Eventually we moved to my chicken coop.

**SR:** So a pick-up truck, a chicken coop and you're on your way.

**Chris:** Yeah. Of course we had

our problems, like when it snowed. For instance, our guitarist lives on the back concessions in the middle of nowhere and we just couldn't get down his lane during this one storm. So we parked at the top of a hill and I walked down to his place and we got his amps and equipment and put them on a toboggan wrapped in garbage bags. And we had to pull this toboggan loaded with equipment up the hill to get to practice. True stories from Glengarry.

**SR:** But how do your friends and relatives and chickens react to all of this?

**Tom:** Egg production went up dramatically. (laughs)

**Chris:** Well, to be totally honest, there are no chickens in the area anymore. But when we started out it was really difficult. When you're in a high school band people do pay attention to you, but people just weren't into what we were doing and they really just didn't give a damn. So it was really hard at first. We had our few friends who of course would come out and stick by us and cheer, but that was it. Eventually, when we started playing big cities, people started to come around and went "Hey, these guys are serious." Then they just started listening to our music and liking it. And now we'll play in a bar back home and people will slam dance.

**SR:** So if you make it in the big city, the local kids'll listen to you?

**Chris:** I think everyone gets influenced. It's taken a long time, but they're starting to become aware of the larger music scene. It's really cool—it's a lot of fun.

**SR:** Are there other bands coming out of your neighbourhood now that they've seen what you've done?

**Chris:** There's been quite a few who've come and gone. There's one band called the **Wallflowers** who still do mostly covers, but they're tight and they pack the local bars. And it's nice to see kids forming bands instead of

**SONIC  
REDUCER**

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these old geezers playing union halls. And our old basist has a band, too, called **Crash 13** who have big plans.

**SR:** *If I understand this right, at the present time there's one band member at school in Ottawa, two in Montreal, and one in Glengarry.*

**Chris:** Yeah, that's right.

**SR:** *The great Canadian band. But how do you do shows if you're spread across two provinces?*

**Chris:** We like to think that we've been together so long that we rehearse instead of practice... Just fine tune the tunes. All summer long we practice a lot, but during the winter it's been rough—we just get together for one or two days of serious full hard practice before a show. And, you know, sometimes it pays off and sometimes it doesn't (laughs). But hopefully we won't have to go through this much longer as we're all graduating this year.

**Tom:** You get burnt a couple of times by not being tight enough, and you just don't do it again.

**Chris:** Yeah, we're making sure we get enough practice in now by meeting back in Bainsville. We actually can't practice in our revamped chicken coop in the winter because it isn't insulated, but we're pretty friendly with the local public school back on one of the concessions and they let us use this little portable classroom to rehearse in.

**SR:** *Excuse my ignorance. h111 what's a concession?*

**Chris:** It's a road. A gravel road.

**Tom:** A range road.

**Chris:** Tom's even more of a hick than I am—he knows these things.

**SR:** *Now you guys are buying Marshall stacks...*

**Chris:** Yeah, dad's so pleased (laughs). He can hear the melody a little clearer now.

**SR:** *So is 1/s par! , f a ,ound clangefor 1e hall() It seems to be gelling /O11der.jit:ier and fa., 1er-is tl1s deliherate of11,1 erP11to11!*

**Tom:** It's more of a natural thing, really. I mean, when you go from an older style amp like we had before to a Marshall, the sound is bound to change. That doesn't necessarily make you play faster, but it does give you a little more confidence—knowing you've got a solid sound behind you.

**Chris:** But we're not trying to make a sound, it's just happening. And I'm still not sure what exactly our sound is yet, it's still coming.

**Tom:** It's not like, because you've got Marshalls on stage you're evolving into a speedmetal band. That's a common misconception. It's just a decent sound quality to put an edge on the music.

**SR:** *But even before the amps, you guys were changing your sound, adding that edge.*

**Chris:** I think we're just trying to... I don't know, I've never really thought about this before.

•More in our first issue...



## TRUE STORIES FROM GLENGARRY

One time we were playing in Ottawa and we needed a ride. A friend of ours had this big meat truck—the back was a big cube that was refrigerated. So we all piled into the back—four band members and another three friends who were just coming along to get drunk.

We piled in the equipment and the two-fours and closed the doors. And it was pitch-black inside—you couldn't see a thing. We were worried if we could breathe in there or not. So we ran a string out the back door, over the roof, and into the cab, so if we tugged on it it would mean to pull over 'cause we couldn't breathe or something.

So we got going, and we had flashlights and the two-fours and we were just having a great party. But the one thing we forgot was that when you drink you have to go to the bathroom. So we pulled on the string, but when we closed the door, it had jammed the string against the frame. So we were racing along, blitzed out of our minds, and we couldn't stop the van.

Anyway, we finally made it to Ottawa and played the show. And afterwards our rowdy roadies were being very, I don't know, bad... abusive... to the restaurant above the place where we'd played. So the manager came out and said "What's the name of your band? I'll make sure you never play here ever again!"

Anyway, the roadies all came out into the truck again. I didn't know why the guy was so mad at them, but they kept telling me "Come on, let's go! Get in the truck! Let's leave!" And I was going "What? Calm down, I'm trying to talk to the manager here, maybe set something up." But they kept telling me to get in the truck.

So I open the back doors and there they are sitting around a table from the restaurant, with all the chairs and the cutlery and everything.

It was hilarious, and it was a long time ago, so I can now go on the record. The names have been omitted to protect the guilty.

The Resurrection witnessed  
by **Paul Brooks**

Captured on film  
by **Shawn Scallen**



# SNFU.

**B**efore 1981, Canada was largely ignorant of the term "punk" and just about the only punk bands to play in the country did so with the assistance of a passport. That was until SNFU emerged from the frozen concentrate known as Edmonton.

Fronted by the dred-fully acrobatic vocals of Chi Pig, SNFU swelled a rippling pool of teenage aggression and flooded the country with their hybrid of post-punk anarchy. With the assistance of bandmates Mark and Brent Belke, Curtis Creager and J. Seth Card (who went on to drum for DOA), SNFU chiselled themselves a sizable niche in the North American hardcore scene.

At the time of their demise in the fall of 1989, not only had SNFU gained notoriety on a national level, but were threatening to be the next big international independent act and, therefore, one of our greatest raw material exports. So it

seems ironic that the band, with their abrasive, not-too-pretty antics and often violent (but harmless) crowd reaction, chose to kick off their "Wrong Turn Down Memory Lane" reunion tour at Vancouver's Commodore Ballroom.

Firstly, this is a ballroom in every sense of the word, straight from the set of *The Shining*: Mirrors, chandeliers, bubbling water-filled pillars, and a dancefloor that bounces due to the strategic placement of industrial springs underneath. The Commodore and SNFU are a definite cultural clash.

In the past, the Ballroom has played host to a multitude of legendary gigs—including DOA's farewell performance in 1990, but most pale in comparison to SNFU. Supporting the recently-released greatest (and unreleased) hits package, *The Last of the Big Time Suspenders*, the band added to the growing legend of the Commodore. While lines of sight were often hindered by the outrageous



number of stage-divers, the band nevertheless kicked everybody's ass around the ballroom a few times and proved why they revolutionized the punk rock movement in Canada.

On that note, Chi Pig was more than happy to discuss the fate and the future of 'one, two, SNFU.'

**SR:** *Was there a lot of preparation for this tour?*

**Chi:** We rehearsed for a week at a rented practice spot in Vancouver.

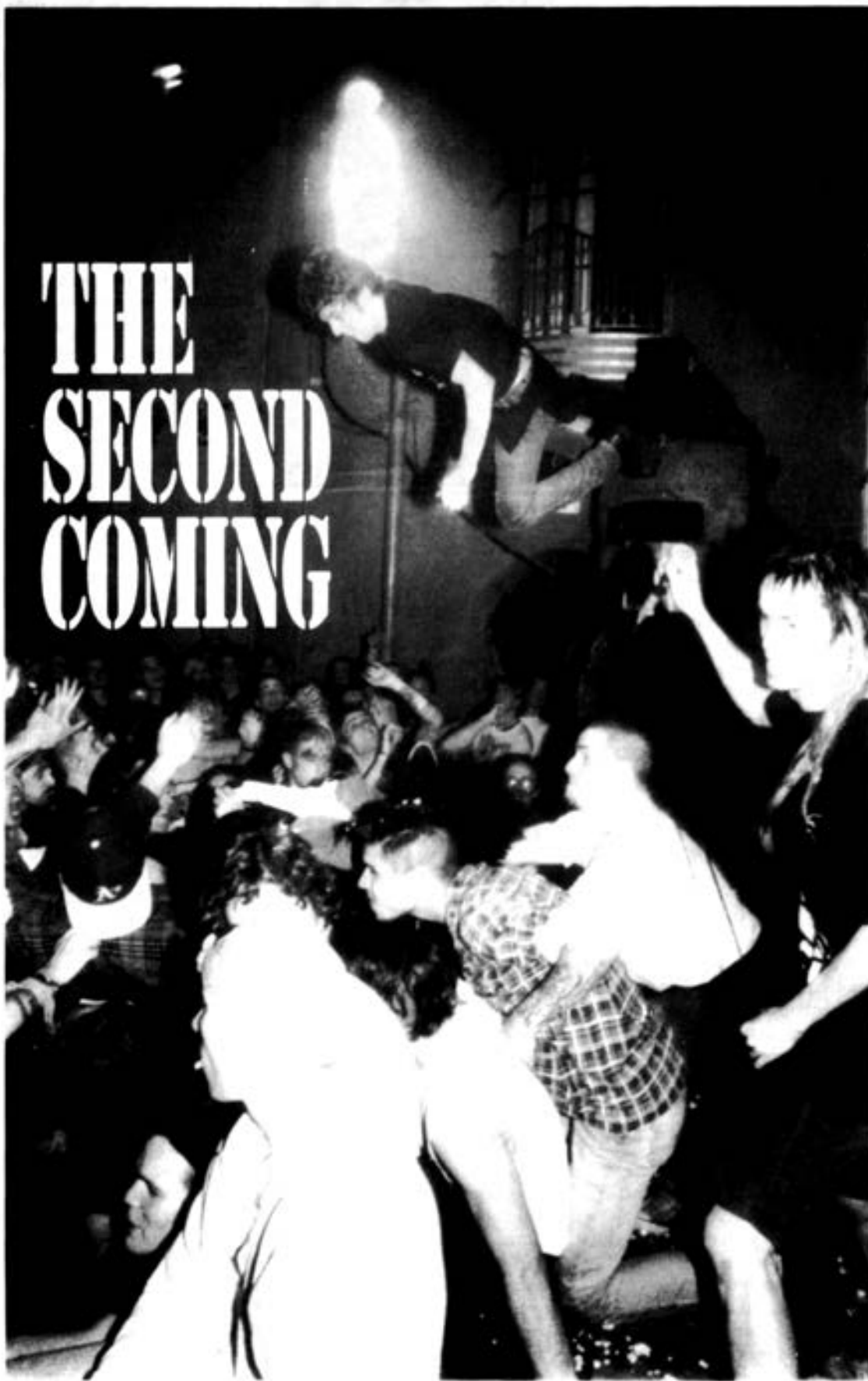
**SR:** *Did you guys already have a lot of stuff together?*

**Chi:** Well, if we had had more time we could've learned more

**SONIC  
REDUCER**

# 'THE SECOND COMING

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songs. As it stands now, we have about 23 or 24 songs for the tour. We're going to relearn some more as we go along because it doesn't come back automatically. We're not the trickiest band in the world, but it takes a while to jar the memory again.

**SR:** *Is it difficult getting back together after two or three years? Any bad feelings?*

**Chi:** Between the band members? No, none at all.

**SR:** *Everyone wants to do this?*

**Chi:** That's why we're here. If one person had said they didn't want to do it, we wouldn't be. The idea was, or is, for us to just get together for this tour and spend some time together. I'm still friends with these fellows and I rarely see them, so this is an opportunity for us to spend some time together and take a break from our other bands. Everybody is actively playing in other bands right now and we just want to play some energetic music and have some fun.

**SR:** *Whose idea was it to have the tour?*

**Chi:** Well, we've been talking about it for a long time. Over the last year and a half we've casually mentioned it but it just seemed difficult, up until about two months ago. The timing is very good right now even though it is the dead of winter and probably the fucking worst time to go across Canada. We've had to take time from our jobs and the progress of our other bands, but the time is now. We thought that if we'd waited it might not happen and it was something we wanted to have happen because we like the songs, we like each other and we're looking forward to playing to audiences that have some enthusiasm towards what it is we do. I mean, there is enthusiasm with the other bands, but this is on a bigger level. If the commodore show was any indication, I think it's going to be pretty damn good, because, as far as I was concerned, the mood was there. The band was a



## YOU COULD BE THE FUCKING BEST BAND IN THE WORLD BUT IF NONE OF THE GUYS GET ALONG IT'S RATHER FEEBLE.

little sloppy because it was our first show, but the mood was very, very good. There was a really good atmosphere.

**SR:** *It seemed like you guys hadn't stopped playing as a unit... like there wasn't a two-year hiatus at all.*

**Chi:** Yeah, it was kind of a weird time warp. Ironically, this was SNFU's biggest Vancouver show, attendance-wise, aside from opening for the Red Hot Chili Peppers at the Commodore before.

**SR:** *That's surprising. Where do you draw most of your fans from: Canada... Europe... America...?*

**Chi:** Canada! Canada was always really good. The West

Coast, which we're doing right now, is great. We only went to Europe once, but it was phenomenal over there; just the way you get treated... people just seem more appreciative of the music.

**SR:** *When you went over to Europe did you get this strong reaction because you were a Canadian band or because the people knew who you were?*

**Chi:** Both. Because we were from Canada we were viewed as exotic and our records have been circulating there for awhile. The correspondence over there has always been really good and there's just been a lot of people who've been dying to see the band. You know, they read great things about us in these American magazines and they just want to see us so we were greeted with much enthusiasm. It was a busy tour and rather grueling actually.

**SR:** *If you were to put yourself on a musical level where would you say SNFU was when they broke up? In other words, do you think you had a foothold in the American market where it is so hard for a Canadian band to gain recognition?*

**Chi:** As far as independently goes, we had our foot in there pretty good and if we would have stuck it out two more years it would have broken open. Things were getting better, they weren't spiraling downward at all as far as audiences and things like that went. And then Better Than A Stick In The Eye, which was the last record at that time, was the best selling one of the three. Crowd response was great...we kind of nipped it in the bud ironically. The main thing is it's all internal. If things aren't working well...you could be the fucking best band in the world but if none of the guys get along it's rather feeble.

**SR:** *Is that why the break up happened?*

**Chi:** Well, after eight years, at that point, things get kind of tense. You get a little bit annoyed at one another and you

need a break. My idea was to not actually announce that we had officially broken up. I wanted to just not do anything for six months, not even look at each other for three and then decide what we were going to do. I don't think we should've just came out and said "Yeah, we're going to break up," but they didn't want it lingering. They just wanted it stopped. It wasn't my decision at all. We pretty much tried to run things democratically and ...four against one. Contrary to what some people might write I'm not going to beg people to play in a band with them.

**SR:** *In retrospect are there any regrets by anybody in the band on the breakup?*

**Chi:** No 'cause it's given us time to do other things. It's nice to come back and do this then go back and do the other things as well. Change is always good. I think, or your thinking gets kind of stale after a while. We can't really look at this as a progression because we're not playing any new material at this point. But you never know, that might happen later on down the road.

**SR:** So something could happen from this...?

**Chi:** Yeah, but we don't want to get too far ahead of ourselves. We've committed ourselves to the seven week tour and we'll take it from there. If things go really, really well maybe we'll discuss getting together to go to Europe.

**SR:** *If SNFU was to get back together today and make this a permanent thing do you think they would be as popular as they were when they broke up?*

**Chi:** I don't know, that's a hard one to call. It's hard to predict something like that. My obvious answer would be, "I would hope so," but I can't predict the predictions of other people. We're very early into this tour but we've had some great response by people who thought that it was very nice that we had gotten our shit together enough to come out and play. It's kind



**WHEN  
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"OH, THEY  
SOUND A LOT  
LIKE SNFU."**

of hard to tell right now. From the buzz that's going around, there is a lot of enthusiasm from other cities just waiting for us to get there; and we will get there.

**SR:** *Do you think it would be safe to say that you guys revolutionized punk rock in Canada?*

**Chi:** I don't know. There was one thing going for us, instead of saying that we sounded like someone else, when people were to describe other punk bands they would say, "Oh, they sound a lot like SNFU." So we do have something that other people don't have. I don't know exactly what it is but we experiment a lot with tempo changes and things like that; not really your

straight-forward hardcore stuff. And some of the songs had a bit more meat to them than other punk rock bands, plus our mix of personal issues and humour was something that you didn't find everyday.

**SR:** *Did you ever consider SNFU to be political at any point?*

**Chi:** Just personal type politics but never any party politics or anything like that. We are against white people beating up black people simply because they are black: things that just made common sense to us. We're fairly well earthed.

**SR:** *Will the majority of your shows be all ages shows?*

**Chi:** Apparently, in the States right now, the all ages market isn't that grand. But in Canada we're trying to go for the all ages thing 'cause that kind of targets the SNFU listener. They buy more t-shirts and seem to be more enthusiastic to the music anyway; they're not as jaded. However, I did kind of mention that there were a lot of "punk rock relics" in the audience at the Commodore show. And there were a couple on stage as well. We can't deny it, we're not young anymore.

If this turns out to be problematic and something happens down the road and it turns out we're not getting along because after all we're only human, this might be the last one. But we can't say and we're kind of just sitting in the middle right now. Our concentration and our vision is set on completing this tour. I'm just looking forward to playing for everybody and I hope they enjoy seeing us because on a physical level we're giving an honest effort as far as the live performance goes.

*The band's tour was a major success and, while they're still working with their other bands, a European tour is being planned, as well as a future release of new material. Look for the Third Coming of S.N.F.U. at a sweat palace near you.*

**Braindead Soundmachine**

2 Song EP *I'm In Jail, Dogvillason*  
Industrial-techno-acide repetition-  
dance floor mix. Heavy, repetitious,  
machine-gun bottom end with  
screeching grinding samples.  
Sounds promising, but then the  
vocals come in; smooth, groovin'  
and reminding us that this is, after  
all, disco music. No danger here.  
Not the most interesting of recent  
Wax Trax releases. (Wax Trax Inc.,  
1659 N. Damen Ave., Chicago, Ill.  
60647)

Zippy

**Bunchofuckingoofs**

*Carnival of Chaos and Carnage*  
The staple of the T.O. underground  
finally put out a full-length album.  
I'm not sure how exactly to describe  
their sound, except to say that  
they're a damn fast, rockin' band  
(maybe a little too fast for some).  
They toss in a mixture of speed,  
heavy metal and hardcore that'll  
make your eardrums bleed when  
played at the proper volume. The  
one problem I have with it is that  
the songs are mostly constructed in  
the same way: A fast intro, a slow  
break, and then a fast ending. Tight,  
loud, in-ya-face hardcore that'll  
really annoy your neighbours, but  
could use a little more imagination.  
(Fringe Product, P.O. Box 670,  
Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W  
1G2)

François Demers

**Banlieue Rouge**

*Que Tombent Les Masques*  
Okay, so maybe you're not perfectly  
bilingual. Who cares? It's the music  
that makes the difference and  
Banlieue Rouge is worth buying on  
any level. French (as in "France")-  
style drum-machine punk-core with  
melody and the occasional sweep of  
noise through the speakers—this is  
Bérurier Noir style punk music  
that's learnt its lessons well and is  
now preparing to teach some of its  
own. I'm not sure if it's quite as  
good as their first release, but still  
they can only be compared to  
themselves—a tribute to why  
they're the Quebec underground's  
most popular franco-rock band. (Tir  
Groupé/Cargo).

J.D. Head

**Hunger Farm**

*Dogma*  
Twelve wicked-fast tunes on sick-  
green coloured vinyl. Screaming  
vocals, squealing guitars, the 1,2,3,4



S.N.F.U.

beat thing. Oh-oh! I think this may  
be the start of a punk-retro nostalgia  
trip. Or maybe they're twelve years  
late. Hmmmm...I detect a Husker  
Dū, Doughboys influence here.  
Must be post-punk then. I suppose it  
doesn't really matter—they sound  
like a pretty good rock band. Safe  
but rockin'. (Nemesis Records/  
Cargo)

Zippy

**Pitbull**

*With a name like Pitbull I'm*  
expecting big things: These guys  
better be tuff. Surely they could  
have come up with a more exciting  
album cover. Of course where it  
really matters is in them grooves.  
(Yes, my copy is vinyl!) And here,  
these Detroit rockers don't disap-  
point. It's more of this post-punk  
thing but a lot heavier. Not metal-  
heavy, just high velocity punk/rock  
slash'n burn. Drums are way up  
front pounding and propelling the  
monster thrash with a scraping  
guitar slicking through and a lunatic  
singer who sounds like a rabid dog  
on a short leash. It ain't new and it  
ain't fancy, but it barks and bites  
and tears at the throat like a... a...  
pitbull. (Nemesis Records/Cargo)  
Zippy

**Bad Brains**

*Spirit Electricity—Live*  
Sure Bad Brains studio albums are  
great but they never capture the raw  
energy, spirit or electricity of one of  
the best live bands in America. The  
band must know this too, that's why  
they keep releasing live stuff. This  
six-song release combines four  
raging thrash numbers, *Return to*  
*Heaven*, *Let Me Help*, *Banned in*  
*D.C.* and *Attitude* with two extended  
funked-up reggae dance floor

grooves: *Youth Are Getting Restless*  
and my favorite thing on the album a  
heavy, dubbin combo version of the  
Beatles/Stones, *Day Tripper/She's a*  
*Rainbow*. As great as this sampler is,  
it's no substitute for a good live  
show—which we don't see too often  
in these parts. For best results play at  
loud volume. (SSF Records, P.O. Box  
1, Lawndale, Cal. 90260)  
Zippy

**Social Distortion**

*Somewhere Between Heaven and*  
*Hell*

Damn cool! These guys can sure  
play a rollickin' good tune. Judging  
by their photo, you'd figure they're  
a bunch of rockabilly rejects, which  
they are, thank god. There's enough  
distortion, heavy sounding riffs and  
goofy lyrics to make any Rocker  
estatic. Add to all this a Pixie-ish  
energy and you're on your way.  
Eric says they're really cute too. I'd  
have to agree. If you're a rock 'n  
roll enthusiast, pick this one up.  
(Sony Music)

Emma Tibaldo

**Cycle Sluts From Hell**

This just goes to show that wearing  
leather bras when you hang out in  
New York bars really can get you  
that major label record contract. The  
Sluts write the lyrics, which are  
usually tongue-in-cheek (or tongue-  
in-something) and real fun. They  
sing, too. Not that great, but it is  
heavy metal so who cares. But some  
guy called Lord Roadkill writes  
most of the music and it sucks.  
No... Sucks, with a capital 'S'. I  
guess it's all supposed to sound like  
they're making fun of all these  
heavy metal clichés, but most of the  
time it just sounds like they're  
playing heavy metal clichés. The

final problem is that the band was obviously set up to be seen and only sometimes heard, and the pictures are just too damned small now with vinyl having bitten the big corporate deathburger. BUT you should buy this, if only because it includes a song that has my vote for best tune—musically and lyrically—of the 90's: *I Wish You Were A Beer*. It just doesn't get any better than this. (Sony Music USA).

J. D. Head

## Senator Flux

### Storyknife

Okay, so Eric says these guys sound like XTC or something. Maybe they do. After all, XTC did do the complete wimp-out sell-out thing later in their lives. This is annoying hippy-dippy twangy shit that might've been innovative or at least mildly interesting if they'd managed to release it a little before the *Beatles Rubber Soul* LP. The cover's annoying, the band's retro-look is to barf, the lyrics are stupid, the music is crap. Recommended highly to brain-dead college radio programmers. (Emergo/Cargo).

J.D. Head

## Sawtooth

### Eats A Buick

Noisemonsters of the future. Sawtooth are not really fresh and original, but one hissy recording wouldn't do justice to their live material. They're promising, teetering on the border of the much overrated/reminisced-about early punk-core and the more contemporary industrial-thrash. You almost cringe at the feel of the serrating guitars on *Control, I'm Only Dreaming* and *Doghouse*, whereas *Bodies* echoes a certain distant

impending doom—kindoflike early *Nomeansno*. Definite walls of guitar. A worthwhile dip into the depths of the thrash-industrial whirlpool. (EnGuard Records, 1671 St-Hubert, Montreal, Quebec H2L 3Z1).

Anushka Garcia

## Asexuals

### Exile From Floontown

For a band which has been through a few line-up changes and subsequent changes in musical orientation since vocalist John Kastner's departure for another band in 1987, their new stuff echoes those distant sounds of '87. *Exile* is still heavily influenced by the *Jerry Jerry* and *Doughboys* sounds, as well as some more straight-ahead rock 'n roll contemporaries. For example, some of the new and improved Asexuals make me think of their contemporaries *Rise* especially in tunes like *Hurt Me* ('Til The End Of Time) and *Jones'n* but various other floon tunes incorporate C&W sounds (*Blood of a Martian*). The vocals are slightly stifled and reverb-charged to produce a soft-toned type crooning over the generic phlanger power-pop. This is still cool stuff to listen to, and demonstrates why they're the favourite band of the Montreal mainstream media. (Cargo)

Anushka Garcia

## That's It

### Really?

A very standard romp through guitar indie-rock. You've heard all the riffs and styles before, and for the main part, done a lot better than this. Musically and vocally the band stands somewhere between Fugazi and the Cult; the lyrics are a very

predictable mixture of personal angst (not getting laid) and political concern - neither one sounding particularly moving. It gives guitars, and the whole notion of alternative, a bad name... as if it needed any help. Don't buy this. (BYO Records, P.O. Box 67A64, Los Angeles, CA, 90067)

Will Richards

## Purr

### Praise the Bottle

Purr shows us a lesson we must constantly re-learn—that powerful music need not mean a sonic attack of harsh instrumentation on the senses (not that I have anything against that). Two acoustic guitars that slip around each other somewhere in the hinterland of twisted folk/blues. Vocals are muted yet brimming with force. *Homicide* is an amazing track. Buy this. (Mada Records, no address available)

Will Richards

## 8-Bark

### The Big Wheel (4 song 7")

The potential of this band is far from realized on this their second 7" release on Underdog Records. The energy, rawness and precision of their live shows makes this band what it is—good. Unfortunately, that is all lost somewhere in the recording process. With better production this could be something really worthwhile. Singer/guitarist Doug has the best tattoos I've ever seen. Buy it anyway, if only to support decent bands who are brave enough to still release singles. (Underdog Records, P.O. Box 141182, Chicago Ill., 60614)

Will Richards

## Ripcordz

### Kidnoise

Okay. My 14-year-old sister, whose current musical knowledge extends from *Bing Crosby* to *Nirvana* loves this stuff. Why? There's a whopping 21 tracks on the CD and still no *Napalm Death*-length mini-tunes. I mean, the title track is over six minutes long. It's loaded with punk-core influenced rock 'n roll grit raunch laced with some almost-carefully-hidden blues riffs. Some pretty solid drumming delivered by François Demers, especially on *Straight Up*, not to mention solid bass grooves and a riotous false start to *Cruisin' the Spaceways*. Lyrics go from the punk sublime to the ridiculous. *Kidnoise* epitomizes the



Ripcordz.



dark sounds that draw the kids to the 'cordz shows. No two ways about it—if you like punk/core/rock, you will OD on this. (EnGinard Records, 1671 St-Hubert, Montreal, Quebec H2L 3Z1)

**Anushka Garcia**

#### **SNFU**

*The Last of the Big Time Suspenders*. Here's an interesting one—something you really want to like, but that really doesn't knock you over the way you think it should. They're still SNFU, but the stuff here is a mix of live and unreleased studio stuff—basically, stuff that wasn't good enough to fit on their first three LPs. Still, the live tracks have that hardcore punch from their first record, without the over-produced wall-of-speedmetal-guitars feeling of their later efforts. And *Grunt, Groan, Rant and Rave!* (a studio track) is worth the price of admission if you don't already have it from that old Edmonton comp. All in all, a definite need for SNFU fans everywhere, but if you're trying the band for the first time, buy one of their studio LPs. (Cargo)

**J. D. Head**

#### **Trasvision Vamp**

*Little Magnets Versus The Bubble Of Babble*. England's reigning pop-punk outfit trades in its Doc Marten's for some open-toed sandals and reverse from the great punk rip-offs of their first two LPs to some mediocre 60's rip-offs on this slightly muddled outing.



#### **The Cycle Sluts From Hell**

*Twangy Wig-Out, Ain't No Rules. You Put A Spell On Me*: I guess this makes them a little late for that 60's-revival thing, but anything's worth a try to cash in on that big U.S. market. *If Looks Could Kill* is an amazing song. The rest is pop, but pop without the edge or imagination or the simple pop sense of their first records. (MCA)

**J.D. Head**

#### **Northern Vultures**

*Tabarnak Hardcore*. The Vultures return with their first full-length release—a powerful

half-studio, half-live LP. The studio tracks feature some great new songs but something gets lost, maybe the guitars which could use a little more volume. It was a great idea to add the live tracks because these really capture the band's vitality and energy. If you like fast, energetic punk/hardcore, you'll love the Vultures. I do. They're good on tabarnak! (Fringe Product, P.O. Box 670, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1G2)

**François Demers**

#### **Swinghammer**

##### *Pomo A GoGo*

This is a joke, right? And I'm just missing it, I guess. I mean, even Toronto can be so self-absorbed that it could pass off this crap as something vaguely interesting or artistic or Cool or relevant or... plain good, even. Just put together everything that everyone hated about the seventies: the corporate approach, the overblown production, the mass-produced melodies, the self-important artistic attitude, the Important Guitar Solo, and add a guy who can't carry a toon. MIGOD This Is So Fucking Awful! Really, truly, Awful. The only thing I can't figure is why a normally level-headed Cool company like Fringe would put this out. Personally, I'd even listen to a whole Pink Floyd record before I'd listen to a minute of this. Fucking Awful. (Fringe Product, P.O. Box 670, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1G2)

**J.D. Head**

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# **26**

# WINDWALKER

**A Canadian style of  
non "cork-in-the-butt-  
straight-edge"**

**W**indwalker is one word. It is also the name of a Vancouver trio—currently seeking a primal skin basher to take them up to that comfortable quartet feel—who have made themselves quite popular in the Northwest region within a meager year and a half. Despite the Spinal Tappish drummer problems the band has managed to gig the region regularly and find time to record and release a couple of worthy audio gems.

In the summer of 1990, vocalist/guitarist Stuart Oijen, bassist Anthony Hempell and guitarist Phillipe Dobeli, got together with their first drummer and solicited their demo to anyone who was willing to listen.

"We've been compared to Fugazi, Motorhead and the Stooges," says Hempell, so naturally this gave them a foot in the door with college radio listeners.

The band's prosperity and profile continued to rise in the fall of 1990 as they swept a three month Vancouver alternative talent hunt which bequeathed upon them a plethora of prizes, including recording time at Vancouver's infamous Mushroom Studios.

Local indie label Mint

Records soon tucked Windwalker under their proverbial wing and a split single was soon spawned with fellow Vancouverites, **Tankhog**. *The Mint Is a Terrible Thing to Taste* features Windwalker covering Ministry's *Burning Inside* and hovered near the top of college charts for a several months.

With their Mushroom Studio recording time the band managed to put together their first full length CD, *Rainstick*, which should be available as you read this, on the Mint label.

"When we went down to Seattle we were roaming around until we found this little Mexican artifact store and Stuart bought this rainstick. It's a hollowed out piece of wood," says Hempell, "And inside it's got all these seashells that run down and sound like water running when you turn it; like rain...pitter-patter, pitter-patter."

The band's influences run the musical gamut from the Dream Syndicate and My Bloody Valentine to NoMeansNo and delta blues. But this doesn't mean Windwalker hasn't forged their own sound.

"When we started out you could go through our songs and say we sounded like this band, or this band, or this band, but it's gotten to a point now where we've got our own way of

making music."

After some very healthy opening spots for such a big name acts as Buffalo Tom, Dinosaur Jr. and Jesus Lizard, Windwalker are hoping to tour the west coast and spread their Canadian style of non "cork-in-the-butt-straight-edge."

"What Windwalker is about is the many, many, many different facets of perception. In some ways it's reconciling opposites."

Contact: Mint Records, #669-810 West Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia.

paul t. brooks



PHOTO: Ben Johnson

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